

# RUSSIA IS ALL READY TO STRIKE A TELLING BLOW AT GERMANY'S ARMIES.

### The Grand Duke's Strategic Scheme Is Complete—German War Lords Have Likely Heard Their Fate Correctly.

Petrograd, Dec. 17.—There appears to be some misapprehension about the Czenstochowa-Cracow front. It covers about 70 miles and is thoroughly well served with strategic railways in various directions. At the very opening of the war, the first thing the Germans did was to seize Czenstochowa, turn it into a German township, and erect fortifications. The work, with the pressed labor of local peasants, has been in progress ever since. The fortifications run along the line some miles east of Czenstochowa and Cracow, and take every advantage of the naturally adapted country. Lines of hills, isolated heights and broken country generally provide an ideal foundation for defensive works in many parallel lines and tiers. Nothing has been omitted which science could suggest to perfect the new German stronghold.

Presumably after four months' work everything is ready now, and the Germans have secured for themselves a useful place d'armes on Russian territory.

Such a stronghold can easily be held with third rate troops if attacked, but the Russian commander-in-chief, in leaving the Germans quite unmolested to complete their arrangements, knew perfectly well what he was going to do with it. There is not at present any intention of attacking this German stronghold. Germany has reached the stage where she cannot afford to lock up first line troops in this place d'armes in order to make an attack thence at a favorable opportunity, as they are too badly needed elsewhere; and inferior troops will not effect anything against the Russian armies if they quit the stronghold. Therefore the greater part of the so-called Czenstochowa-Cracow front remains a dead letter so long as the initiative is with the Russians.

We come now to the main area of operations of the whole strategic front from the Baltic to the Carpathians, namely, what is now officially designated as south of Cracow.

It is here that both sides have settled that a decisive battle must take place. Grand Duke Nicholas, indeed, has aimed for this since the war began, as I have many times hinted. The Germans hoped to compel his withdrawal from the main object of his strategic scheme by invading Poland a first time, then a second time and now, finally by throwing enormous reinforcements into action in Poland. The Russians bore all these attacks, and inflicted serious defeats on the German armies, without losing their grip upon the main strategic scheme. At last Germany sent large forces down south, and they are now, in the picturesque language of the official bulletin, "spotted about the Austrian forces," an announcement which, from all we hear, is the reverse of likely to improve the fighting value of either. Germany, of course, is in command.

Within the next week, the great battle which is now heralded by maneuvering of large forces on both sides will open the decisive period of the campaign and clear the way for the invasion of Germany along the line which the grand duke's strategy has schemed for during the long months. What has happened in those months is the guarantee for what will happen now and there are many little signs that the German war lords already have read their fate correctly.

## PHOTOGRAPHING SNOW SCENES.

Length of Exposure Depends on Proximity of Dark Objects. Outing Magazine.

In taking photographs of snow scenes or water, in which trees and darker objects are near, the exposure should be determined for the darker objects, and should not be cut down to the quarter of the time on account of the snow or water. If detail is to be preserved in them, hold out the strong blue and violet rays with a ray-screen.

The exposure should be cut down only when snow, sea or sky make up the bulk line of the picture and other objects are absent or their detail is unimportant. It should be remembered that the purpose of the ray-screen is that of an equalizer, to kill the preponderant effect of the blue and violet rays while you are exposing for the less active ones from other parts of the picture.

## Lighting Christmas Candles.

Rochester Express. The suggestion is made that a lighted candle be placed in our windows on Christmas eve, symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, to keep alight in our hearts the deep significance of the event that yuletide brings to memory.

It is a good suggestion. In these days when the world is tending to become commercialized and we live so much upon the surface of life, we are all too likely to lose sight of much that the Christmattide anciently commemorated and have only the empty outer husk of the festival left. We ring our bells, hang up our garlands, make our gifts. "We bid our tapers twinkle fair," as one has sung, "and feast and frolic; then we go back to the same old lives again."

But Christmas robbed of the old time faith and celebrated with thought of the beautiful mystery it should serve to keep in remembrance is only a commonplace birthday like any other. Light the candles, then, and may they relight a waning faith in our hearts. For the world is "too much with us, late and soon, getting and spending." On one night of the year at least, if on no other, we should steal time from our worldly concerns to live that far-away first Christmas over in our minds and feel if we can all that the star of promise meant to the little group of shepherds who watched in wonder from their hills when it flamed out in the deep, blue Syrian skies.

## QUENCHING BURNING OIL.

### New Apparatus is Invented To Put Out Flames.

Popular Mechanics Magazine. When any considerable quantity of oil, particularly gasoline, catches fire, the result is usually the worst kind of fire there is and the hardest to put out. Combinations of chemicals have been invented that can be made to form a foam over the surface of the oil and smother the flame, but the greatest difficulty has been in applying these chemicals quickly and effectively. An apparatus recently invented apparently solves this problem and provides a means for extinguishing such fire automatically and within a few seconds after the fire starts.

The chemicals are placed in standpipes arranged around the side of the tank and having their outlets projecting over the surface of the oil. Wires with fusible links at the centers are stretched across the tank and the whole installation is simply left in place as a guard against possible fire. As long as the wires are taut the apparatus is inoperative. In case of fire the links are fused, the wires drop and the apparatus that mixes the chemicals and discharges them through the outlets of the standpipe is set in operation.

## AN ABLE GENERAL.

### King Albert Never Posed As Military Genius.



ALBERT, KING OF BELGIANS. King Albert never posed as a military genius or expert before the beginning of the present conflict, and was far more occupied in the economic and social development of his population than with army matters. But although his capital, Brussels, and his chief stronghold, Antwerp, are in the hands of the Germans, he has shown himself a far abler general than the Kaiser.

For with his small army, in the face of overwhelming odds, both in numbers and armament, he, by obstructing the passage of the German invasion of France through Belgium, frustrated Emperor William's plans of securing possession of Paris by the middle of August, and indeed is responsible for the complete failure of the entire German campaign in France.

France, Great Britain and Russia, the three great powers who are his allies, are very deeply indebted to the successful and resourceful generalship which he has displayed ever since the Germans invaded his territory, and under the circumstances it was particularly appropriate that he should be invested by King George with England's ancient Order of the Garter, on the battlefields in France, within the sound of the German heavy artillery.

It is the first occasion in all the long history of the order, dating back some 600 years, of a knight of the order having received its insignia on the actual scene of war.

## WAR IS AN ART.

### Rather Than a Science Says Gen. Joffre.



GENERAL JOFFRE

According to France's able commander-in-chief, Generalissimo Joffre, who has won for himself world wide fame since the beginning of the present war, he who decides in military matters should belong to no school.

He declares that war is an art rather than a science, and that if a civilian happens to possess this art, he may prove a far more successful commander than the man who has learned his knowledge of war as a science. General Joffre is, I believe, the first professional soldier who has ever admitted this fact, and he means the admission during the course of a discussion on the cleverness shown by King Albert in the leadership of his gallant little army. It seems that when the war broke out, King Albert hesitated about entering the effective leadership of his troops, modestly declaring that he was not a strategist, and expressing his fears of making a mistake. His prime minister, however, M. de Broqueville, reassured him, and advised him to always bear what his staff had to say and then to make his own decisions, and King Albert is now a general.

## A Yule Tide

The club looked just the very thing Gerald Mannersley was craving for—a sense of home.

A few lines read accidentally in an out-of-date newspaper had made him restless with longing for the old scenes. And so he had traveled two days and nights in a sleeper, vaguely connecting his journey's end with all the love and friendship his starved nature was demanding.

When he arrived at his old club on a chill, grey Christmas morning, it was only to find that fifteen years' silent absence had been too severe a test for friendship. The place was empty of all but servants, and they wore strange unwelcoming faces.

He stood at the club window, looking out on the desolate, deserted street which he had always remembered as being thronged, and a great sadness swept over him.

From his pocket he drew out the scrap of paper which had really brought him so many miles, and looked at it bitterly. It was only a dead announcement cut from a paper of a year ago, and ran in the usual way—"Michael Townley, at his residence," etc.

In fancy he saw a sweet-faced maiden, who sought her happiness only in the eyes of the youth by her side. There were joy-bells there, too, as they left the church with the fragrance of mutual love about them.

The bells pealed on outside, and willing fancy led him still further into the realm of "might have been."

In an instant he made up his mind to visit once more the old-fashioned cottage not many miles away, to which he had hoped fifteen years before to take a bride. He would go and see it, even if its neglected condition only added to his loneliness and pain.

Two hours later he was striding through the crisp country air along a winding path which led to a rambling ivy-covered cottage.

As the last turn brought him in sight of the house he stopped in surprise. He had expected to see dirt, ruin, and decay, but instead he looked upon a trim, well-kept cottage, and a soft, crooning song, in a voice which reawakened the tender memories of long ago, came floating thro' the unlatched door.

Half believing that it must be fancy leading him still, he entered the house softly, and following the voice, went into the inner room, and stood in the glow of the warm fire-light.

The sweet, tired-faced, middle-aged singer turned as his shadow fell across the light, and then stood white and trembling.

"Gerald," she whispered, "Gerald, have you come to reproach me? Not to-day! Not to-day!"

The strong man's voice broke as he held out his arms.

"Nance!" he cried joyfully.

In a moment she was crushed sobbing to his breast.

"Oh, Gerald, it really you! God is very good. I thought you must be dead."

For several moments they stood thus, the strong man's tears falling on her greying hair. Then he gently put her into a chair.

"You are not alone?" he asked as his eyes caught sight of a little table laid for two, daintily spread with Christmas fare.

"Yes," she answered, "I am quite alone. I have often come down here."

"But you are expecting somebody?" he said, calling attention to the table.

She flushed prettily, looking almost as young as she had in his dreams of the morning, as she replied:

"I was expecting you, Gerald."

He smiled happily at her; then he sank into a chair.

"This is all foolishness, Nance," he said sadly. "You could not live here in the old days, you could do so less now, and I could not live here on another man's thousands."

A smile hovered over the woman's face as she flitted here and there; busily preparing things for a meal. Then she slipped behind a chair and leaning over whispered with burning cheeks:

"Perhaps you do not know, Gerald, that—that Mr. Trowley's money goes back to his family if I marry again."

The man sprang to his feet and took her into his strong arms again.

"It is not too late," he cried. "We are still young. Will you let me try to make you happy?"

Her answer was drowned in the burst of Christmas bells that pealed from the village church close by. But he did not need her words: he could see her eyes.

## COMPOSING ROOM RITES.

### No Hurry to Go to Press in Newspaper Office.

Boston Transcript. The ceremony of propitiating the gods which are supposed to reside in the printing machinery is annually performed by the Hindoo members of the Times of Malaya printing staff.

The usual prosaic machine and composing rooms are turned into weird caverns of mystery, dimly lit by candles and oil lamps, and odorously with the heavy scent of incense and perfumes.

Every machine is garlanded, and has placed before it an offering of "makan." Rice and bananas and cakes are the portion of each machine, according to its size and importance, even the "stone" comes in for a share of the gifts.

At the appointed time baziers containing smoking camphor and coconut oil are carried around and held before each machine; whilst the power engine, whose god presumably is regarded as a particularly aggressive personage, is "smoked" for a specially long period.

Perhaps. "Don't believe it!" said the first little boy, looking at the contents of the tin, which said:

KAISER IN A TRENCH. "Dunnie" said the second, "Fraps he fell in."

# Buy Eddy's Matches

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## FIGHT ! OR PAY THE PENALTY

## POLITENESS AT TELEPHONE INDICATES REAL CHARACTER

### Women Apt to Show Ill-Bred Manners in Wire Conversation With Members of Own Sex.

New York Sun. "I don't understand why anybody is impolite over the phone," remarked a woman visiting in New York, "unless he is cowardly or unless the real character of people. And I especially don't see why women should be impolite to women."

"The most provoking instance I had had in many months occurred right here in New York. An old

and dear friend of mine whom I had not seen in years had married and come to New York to live. Her married name was Blankleigh, let us say, but I did not know her husband's initials and I had no idea where she lived. It was my first visit to New York and I wanted to see her."

"My only hope was that she was in the telephone book, and to it I went. I found six Blankleighs, any one of whom might be she, but which one? It was for me to find out and I began with the first one."

"I asked for Mrs. Blankleigh and she came to the receiver. I apologized and explained why I had called and asked if she were my old friend, since about it and tried to help me. The way she snapped out that she

wasn't and rang off was something awful."

"The following three were variants of the first, not much better and not any worse. Only one of them was a man and he just laughed and said there wasn't any Mrs. Blankleigh in his house at present, but if I—and then I rang off."

"The fifth was the one I sought and I don't have to seek any further. Now I am thinking whether or not to call up the sixth and see if she is any more polite and considerate than the others. And it would have been just as easy to have been polite and nice about it and tried to help me, wouldn't it?"

## Inherited.

"What I can't understand about Billy Wiggles is why, with such a splendid, manly man for a father, Billy should be so effeminate," said Dubbleigh.

"Why, it's simple enough," said Slathers. "His mother was a woman."—Judge.

## The Martyr.

He died that another might live! Shall we grieve for him? No, not a bit. For the eagle-eyed scorer will give The better to sacrifice him. —Harvard Lampoon.